

POULTRY DEPARTMENT.

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Grow Your Own Poultry Food.

We quote, this week, an article by a Florida poultryman, who thinks that the business would be much more profitable if we could grow our own poultry food. He speaks of trying cow peas, but does not mention anything else as being likely to be successfully grown.

We found kaffir corn and milo maize excellent chicken feed and very easily grown. We had one complaint from a reader that the birds destroyed her crop. There may be sections of the state where birds are so abundant as to prevent a crop of these grains from ripening. If so, we should try millet, the pearl or cat-tail millet is a strong grower and yields heavy crops. For fall and winter feed chufas are excellent and the chickens will do their own harvesting, digging as they need them. Poultry can be made profitable here and buy all the feed. We know that this is true, for we have kept an account of the cost of feed and receipts from eggs and chickens, and the result was always in favor of the poultry. Still, if one is so situated as to be able to raise his own food, it will add to the profits, provided the cost of hiring men to do the work is not greater than the cost of the grain.

Florida as a Poultry State.

A Florida poultryman writes to the American Agriculturist as follows:

I believe Florida will, before many years, be as famous for her fine poultry products as for her oranges. There is no reason why she should not, and Floridians are beginning to realize this fact. Father Nature here gives his greatest aid to this enterprise, and poultry raising can so easily go hand in hand with orange culture. This warm climate all the year aids greatly in keeping the hens laying; they need but proper feeding, shelter and care to give large returns in a daily well-filled egg basket. But little extra food is needed to keep up the supply of heat in the fowl's body—almost all goes directly to form flesh or toward egg production.

The housing can be accomplished at small cost. Shed colony houses, boarded on three sides, with the south side covered with wire only as protection against powders with clay or matched board floors only are necessary. Roosts and nests can be built with little expense, especially if the poultry man knows, as he should, something of simple carpentry. Jigger flees, lice and mites can easily be kept under control by using, weekly, a spray made of kerosene, soap emulsion and a good lice killer, by having all floors clayed or made of matched boards and by whitewashing occasionally.

In the runs nothing could be better than Bermuda grass, almost the only kind cultivated in this part of the country. If the yards are made large enough, 25x100 ft., we find by experiment that a flock of 25 hens will not kill this grass out, but the sod will improve all the time, and furnish green food most of the year. It is killed down by frosts but cold weather comes late and warm rains early in

spring. During the winter, green food can be supplied from the garden.

Outdoor brooders, heated by lamps, with part of the runway covered and inclosed on three sides, work splendidly most of the year. However, as we sometimes have three or four cold or rainy days in succession, I prefer a light frame, low posted brooder house, furnished with lamp heated indoor brooders.

We believe much of the feed for chickens could be raised here. Cowpeas with proper working will yield a large crop and when dried and cracked give an excellent food for this purpose. Experiments with other foods are being made.

Farmers here have just learned to use beggarweed for hay and so have greatly reduced the expense of keeping horses and cattle. But the poultry man now buys most of his feed stuff shipped from other states, and this takes a large amount of what might be profit.

Florida offers a good market for poultry products during the winter months, for the great number of Northerners wintering here want, and will pay for the best of everything in this line. Southerners are notably fond of poultry, but will not pay such good prices, so that while the poultry man can dispose of his fowls during the summer he must take less or his customers will go back to eating pork and hominy. Fresh meat is very scarce as none is shipped from the West to this state in summer. Eggs sell here at prices varying from 40 cents, occasionally 50 cents, to 25 cents during the year. Broilers bring 35 cents a pound live weight in winter; we have none for sale in summer. In the spring we hatch for pullets for layers and the roosters are kept for use in summer to supply the home table or occasionally sold for 18 to 20 cents a pound.

As yet there are not many large poultry plants in the state and but few persons who are really interested in beautiful birds from a fancier's point of view, but the interest is rapidly growing and we agree with the promoters of the Florida state fair this year that "there is no industry in Florida that has a brighter future."

Poultry on the Farm.

There is much truth in what a correspondent of Successful Farming says about the keeping of poultry on a farm. Our readers do not raise wheat nor large crops of corn, but many of them no doubt are doing, as the Northern farmers are said to be doing, that is spending their time and strength on crops which will not be so profitable as well kept poultry.

Let every farmer carefully estimate the cost of things he produces in the form of labor. He need not put down the sum he expends out of his pocket but simply endeavor to place a value upon the labor he, himself, bestows on every department of the farm and for each crop. If he is a business man, that is, if he knows what he is doing by keeping account of his operations as every man who is in business does, or should do, he will have no difficulty in classifying the receipts and expenses, and especially the cost of labor. Next let him estimate the space or number of acres of land he has given every one of his crops, and as well as the plowing, harrowing, seeding, cultivating, harvesting, hauling and ship-

ping and charge interest on the capital invested. After he has done this let him take up poultry, place a value upon the meat and eggs, the cost of the labor and food bestowed, the labor particularly, then compare the result from the poultry with those from the large stock and regular crops.

He will find that if he had kept more hens and given them only one-fourth of the care and labor bestowed on other sources of revenue on the farm, he would have had a large balance in his favor.

By looking over the statistics he will find that poultry produces more than sheep, that our enormous wheat crop is not much greater in value annually than the products of the fowls.

With the market always ready and with cash returns every month in the year for poultry and eggs, the farmer uses the most profitable source of income as a "side business" and expends his energies over large areas, being fortunate if he can clear as much as \$10 or \$20 an acre a year, while right under his eyes his fowls on a few rods or acres, give him a quick return both summer and winter which he does not recognize as belonging to farming but which source of revenue he could utilize to the best advantage if he would give poultry his attention as a business.

Incubation and Eggs.

It is a little late in the season for talk about incubators and eggs, but the fall time for starting up the incubators will soon be here.

The wisest man that ever lived, said, "There is nothing new under the sun." A correspondent of the Petaluma Poultry Journal has found new evidence of the truth of the saying.

An article entitled, "The Evolution of Artificial Incubation," compiled by Rev. C. E. Peterson and published in the American Poultry Journal, about the methods of the ancients, shows that there is very little "new under the sun," and if the ancient Egyptians did as the reports show, it is something marvelous and we must concede that we today do only a little better. If they with their crude appliances, without regulator or thermometer, achieved such splendid results, they must have been adapted in the line. It is stated that they applied the eggs in course of incubation to their eyelids to judge the temperature; and they must have known how to test the eggs, as it is also stated that the clear and addled eggs were removed. When the hatching season approached, the ovens were put in order and the people of the neighborhood notified, who brought their eggs, and when the hatch was completed usually got two chicks for every three eggs furnished. Their ovens had a capacity of several thousand eggs, and in that line they teach us a lesson, as formerly we only could use 100, 200, 300 or 500-egg machines successfully, and even at that did as a rule not so very much better. But as time advances we also learn, and large machines will soon take the place of smaller ones, as experience shows that if properly constructed they will do better and are far more economical and hatch stronger, healthier chicks.

According to my experience, we pay too much attention to the air space and not enough to the color of the egg during incubation. As we work most-



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ly with the transparent white eggs we have a better opportunity than those who use the brown egg. I have found right along that the eggs which show a greenish tint never give satisfactory results, and on visiting one of the most experienced egg buyers and seeing him testing the eggs I noticed that he put them aside. When I asked him why, he told me they are no good for storing and go right on to the market. There may be a lesson in this for us. I know also that those eggs are no good for hatching and a good many eggs we put into the incubator should have gone the same way. If we follow the color of the egg during the whole time of incubation it will relieve us of a good deal of anxiety and show us how to have our hatches on time.

Capon.

We feel that we cannot too strongly emphasize the desirability of making capons of your surplus cockers.

We have printed considerable information on the subject already, but have just found a good article in the Rural Californian, which we quote:

Capon is aptly termed the finest chicken meat in the world. We have feasted on capons raised on our farm and found them to be delicious eating. Now some may ask, what are capons? It is neither a hen nor a rooster. After removing the testicles from the cockerel, nature becomes entirely changed. They take on a more rapid growth, are tame, awkward and very lazy, the comb and wattles cease to grow, the spurs do not develop as in the cockerel. Caponizing is carried on on a large scale in France. The flesh of the capon is decidedly sweeter and of a finer flavor than that of cocks. They gain from four to six pounds in weight, while the cost of feeding is no more. If the farmer